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CHUCK DIXON ▼ KIERON DWYER

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~ HaCsA ~ nom deplume ~

PRYING.
NEEDLING.
INSINUATING.
SO OBVIOUS AND TACTLESS.
QUIT THE SENSELESS QUIZZING!
I WILL EXPLAIN IN FULL WHAT YOU, IN THE DEPTHS OF YOUR IGNORANCE, STRUGGLE TO WHEEDLE FROM ME.
THE PATHOS. THE VIOLENCE. THE GENIUS.
THIS IS AN EPIC OF LARCENY AND MURDER. LET ME TELL YOU...
ONCE UPON A CRIME...
2

QUESTIONS
MULTIPLY THE MYSTERY
"I'LL SHARE WITH YOU MY HEADIEST TRIUMPHS AND LOWEST DEFEATS.
"LIKE THE STRADIVARIUS KIDNAPPING.
"WHAT A SWEET SCORE THAT WAS GOING TO BE.
"DAMN THE BATMAN.
CHUCK DIXON - WRITER
KIERON DWYER - ARTIST
RICHMOND LEWIS - COLORIST
ALBERT DE GUZMAN - LETTERER
DARREN VINCENZO - ASSOC. EDITOR
SCOTT PETERSON - EDITOR
BATMAN Created by BOB KANE
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"NOTHING BUT A MASKED DO-GOODER WITH LOTS OF IDLE TIME ON HIS HANDS.

"HE ALWAYS GETS LUCKY.

"ALWAYS SECOND GUESSES MY EVERY MOVE.
"BUT THIS ISN'T BATMAN'S STORY!"

THIS IS THE STORY OF EDWARD NIGMA!
IT'S MY STORY!
"IT ALL BEGAN ON THE TREE-SHADED STREETS OF WATERBURY.
WHY ARE LEAVES GREEN?
BECAUSE.
BECAUSE WHY?
ASK YOUR FATHER!
WHY ARE LEAVES GREEN, DAD?
HOW THE HELL SHOULD I KNOW?
GO BUG SOMEBODY ELSE! I'M BUSY!
I DUNNO. CHLOROPHYLL OR SUMPIN'.
WHUZZAT?
LOOK, YOU GONNA CROSS THE STREET, OR WHAT?
STOP
"ADULTS DIDN'T HAVE THE ANSWERS. OR MAYBE THEY FORGOT THEM.
"I WAS DETERMINED TO BE A GUY WITH ALL THE ANSWERS...

"...EVEN IF I HAD TO MAKE UP THE QUESTIONS.
CHILDREN. A VERY SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT FOR YOU.
A PUZZLE.
"MRS. NORDINE WAS MY SIXTH GRADE TEACHER.
IT'S A GAME. A PUZZLE.
BUT IT'S ALSO A TEST.
JOHN ADAMS
KING
TOMORROW YOU'LL EACH BE TAKEN IN TURN TO THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE.
A GENTLEMAN WILL BE THERE TO MONITOR YOU. HE WANTS TO SEE HOW QUICKLY YOU CAN PUT THIS PUZZLE TOGETHER.
THE STUDENT TO PUT THE PUZZLE TOGETHER IN THE FASTEST TIME WILL BE HONORED AT NEXT WEEK'S ASSEMBLY.
AND NOT ONLY THAT...
...THE WINNER WILL RECEIVE A PRIZE.

WHAT'S IT A PUZZLE OF?
THAT WOULD BE CHEATING... UM... FREDDIE.
MY NAME'S EDDIE.
BIG FAT COW.
"STORY OF MY LIFE, YOU KNOW.
"I WAS A CYPHER. A NOBODY. BENEATH THE NOTICE OF EVEN THE SCHOOL BULLIES.
"BUT I COULD SOLVE THAT PUZZLE.
"THE PRIZE. THE RECOGNITION.
"THE OTHER KIDS WOULD REMEMBER MY NAME.
"THEY'D SIT WITH ME AT LUNCH."

BUT WHAT CHANCE DID I HAVE?
A MEDIOCRE STUDENT. A FACELESS KID, AS FORGETTABLE AS THE CAPITAL OF IDAHO.
TELL YOU A SECRET...
I'M AN ONLY CHILD.
LOTS OF TIMES I'D HEAR MY PARENTS FIGHTING. ONE NIGHT I CRAWLED OUT OF BED AND LISTENED.
THEY WERE BLAMING EACH OTHER FOR SOMETHING.
REALLY GOING AT IT. DISHES AND PANS FLYING.
KNOW WHAT?
THEY WERE BLAMING EACH OTHER FOR ME.
8

"THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY I COULD BEAT THE OTHERS.
"AND IT WAS THEN THAT I FOUND MY TRUE CALLING IN LIFE...
"CHEATING.
"I PUT THE PUZZLE TOGETHER AFTER THIRTY MINUTES.
"AND THEN FIFTEEN.
"THEN TEN.
"THEN FIVE.
9

"I ASSEMBLED THE PUZZLE SIX TIMES IN A ROW IN UNDER ONE MINUTE.
"I THOUGHT THAT WOULD EASILY EARN ME THE PRIZE.
"AND SO IT DID."
BUT ALL GLORY IS FLEETING
A WEEK LATER I WAS A NOBODY AGAIN.
"EVERYTHING WAS THE SAME AS IT WAS.
"EXCEPT THAT THE BULLIES NOW NOTICED ME.

"BULLIES LIKE THE BATMAN!"
"ALL MY SCHEMING AND CHICANERY ONLY SERVE TO BRING CALAMITY TO ME!
"THE BATMAN.
"WHY AM I TALKING ABOUT HIM?"
11

MY STORY
MY STORY.
MY STORY.
MINE!
RUN, RUN, RUN.
ALL I DO IS RUN.
I'M TIRED OF IT. REALLY I AM.
NOW... WHERE WAS I?
THE CONTEST, RIGHT? THE STUPID PUZZLE
YES, MY EVENTLESS CHILDHOOD WAS OVER. THOUGH NOTHING OUTWARD HAD CHANGED...
...I HAD WON THE PRIZE.
12

"A BOOK. MORE LIKE A DOORWAY, ACTUALLY
Brian T. Zer's - PUZZLES, RIDDLES AND GAMES FOR EVER OCCASION EDITED BY BRIAN T. ZER
"I DEVOURED IT WITH THE KIND OF ATTENTION I NEVER WASTED ON MY STUDIES.
"IT MADE ME HUNGRY FOR MORE.
MIND BENDERS
"I HAD TO KNOW EVERYTHING THERE WAS TO KNOW ABOUT PUZZLES AND TRAPS AND TRICKERY.
"MY FAVORITE SUBJECT WAS THE GREAT HOUDINI.
"OLD HARRY AND I SHARE A TALENT.
"WE BOTH CHEAT.
"THE SECRET TO A GOOD TRICK IS FIXING THE SOLUTION AHEAD OF TIME
"SKILL AT SLEIGHT-OF-HAND IS IMPORTANT AS WELL...

"...A SKILL THAT COMES WITH TIME.
"NO.
"NONONONONONONONONO!"
HE WASN'T THERE!
HE CAME LATER...AFTER I LEFT SCHOOL...
"...AFTER I JOINED THE WORK-A-DAY WORLD
"A PRODUCTIVE MEMBER OF SOCIETY, EDWARD NIGMA, WORKING STIFF.
Speedy DELIVERY
"I WAS IN HELL.

OFFICE
"BOREDOM WAS MY PERSONAL DEMON.
"I WAS DOWN AMONG THE DEAD.
"BUT JUST AS THE EARTH WAS ABOUT TO CLOSE ON ME...
"...THE GATES OF HEAVEN YAWNED WIDE.
"I RELIED ON MY GIFT FOR THE CHEAT.
"I HAVE NO REAL SKILL BUT THE FIX.
"MY MIND BENDS AROUND A PROBLEM.
"AND I LOOK FOR WAYS TO CHANGE THE PROBLEM.
"BUT THERE WAS NO THRILL TO THIS."

WHERE WAS THE TRICK? WHERE WAS THE RESPECT?
SIMPLE THEFT WASN'T A GAME IT WAS A JOB.
"I WAS GOING TO HAVE TO ESTABLISH A STYLE.
WHAT DO YOU CALL TWINS BOTH NAMED WILLIAM? WHERE DO COWS GO ON A DATE? WHAT'S THE LAZIEST MOUNTAIN IN THE WORLD?
HUH?
PRECINCT 21 GOTHAM POLICE GOTHAM CITY
"AT FIRST MY CLEVERNESS WASN'T APPRECIATED.
WHAT ARE YOU WAITIN' FOR? HERE'S THE CASH, YA NUT!
ACTUALLY...
EVEREST
DOUBLE BILL TONIGHT
... I WAS EXPECTING SOMEBODY
"I HAD TO WORK HARDER FOR THEIR ATTENTION.
YO, LIEUTENANT. I THINK THIS PACKAGE IS FOR YOU.
ROBBERY DIVISION
YOU THINK?

WELL, IT'S ADDRESSED TO "CHIEF DETECTIVE, MIDTOWN ROBBERY".
GUESS THEY DIDN'T KNOW YOUR NAME, HUH?
JEEZE--
tick tick tick
BOMB!
WHAT IN--?
17

"WHY DID THE COTTAGE GO ON A DIET?"
"WHEN'S THE BEST TIME TO GO TO THE DENTIST?"
"WHAT DAY DO SOLDIERS HATE THE MOST?"
WHAT D'YOU MAKE OF THIS, JIM?
TROUBLE.
The Riddler
SHOULDN'T WE BE SURVEILLING THIS PERP'S GOING TO SEE US JUST STANDING OUT HERE, GORDON.
I DON'T THINK THAT MATTERS, STAN
THE RIDDLES WERE SPECIFIC. HE WANTS US HERE.
THE LIGHTHOUSE CLUB ON MARCH FOURTH.
AND IT'S A MINUTE TO TWO THIRTY
YOU HEAR THAT?
A HISSING SOUND..

INCOMING!
DAMN
"IT WAS CHOICE, I MUST SAY
"THE COPS SCURRYING FOR COVER LIKE COCKROACHES. A BAG HEAVY WITH LOOT OVER MY SHOULDER
hee hee.
"BUT THE FUN STOPPED THERE.
WHAT ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE?

"I'D READ ABOUT HIM IN THE TABLOIDS.
"I THOUGHT HE WAS JUST AN URBAN LEGEND. A DYSTOPIC FOLKTALE. .
"LIKE ALBINO ALLIGATORS IN THE SEWERS, OR THE CHOKING DOBERMAN.
I'M THE RIDDLER!
HUH?
WHAT ARE YOU DRESSED AS? THE QUESTION MARK? THE QUIZMASTER?
"BUT HE WAS REAL, ALL RIGHT.
OOF!

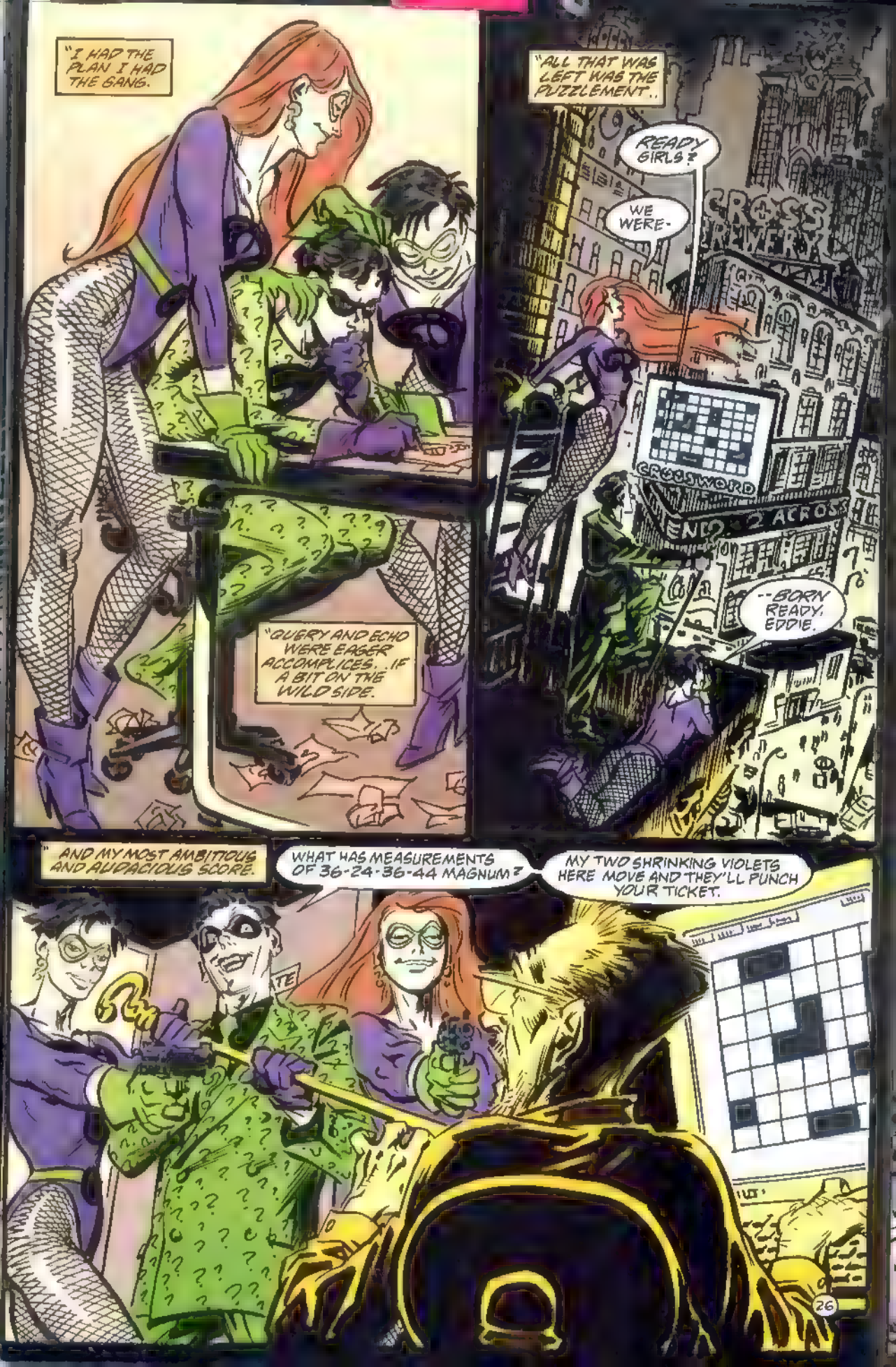
"RIGHT FROM THE FIRST HE KNEW HOW TO HUMILIATE ME; GALL ME.
THE RIDDLER, HM? I'VE HAD IT WITH YOU "THEME" VILLAINS.
UNNH!
DID YOU-- OW!
DID YOU-- UNNH!
DO YOU HAVE ANOTHER RIDDLE FOR ME, RIDDLER?
DID YOU FORGET--THE DYNAMITE?
Ah-hee?

"DUMB LUCK SAVED ME FROM A BAT-ASTROPHE.
"THE BATMAN WAS NO FLATFOOT CIVIL SERVANT."

OH, I'D PROVE MY WORTH TO HIM.
I WASN'T GOING TO PLAY SECOND FIDDLE TO THE JOKER OR TWO-FACE OR ANY OF THE WANNABES!
THE BATMAN WAS SAINT AND DEVIL TO ME...
...A FOIL TO MATCH WITS AGAINST, BUT AN ADVERSARY TO BE WARY OF.
YOU DIMWITS THINK I CREATE MY RIDDLES BECAUSE I WANT TO BE CAUGHT.
WHAT NAIVE, PEDESTRIAN THINKING.
TO ME CRIME IS PERFORMANCE ART!
AND THAT'S WHAT YOU PSYCHOBABBLERS SHARE WITH THE THUGS OF THE WORLD.
LACK OF VISION.

"BUT I KNEW I'D NEED ASSISTANCE TO THWART THE BATMAN.
SO THAT'S MY PLAN. AND I NEED A STRING TO PULL IT OFF.
ONE PROBLEM, RIDDLER.
YOU'RE A HEADCASE. I DON'T WORK WITH HEADCASES.
BUT THE SCORE IS BRILLIANT.
BUT ALL THE RIDDLES AND JUNK.
THEY'RE THE REAL GENIUS OF THE THING. THE POLICE WILL BE BAFFLED
THE POLICE WILL BE ON TO US LIKE STINK ON FISH.
WELL, DENGLAR, I'VE GOT A RIDDLE FOR YOU.
HOW DO YOU KEEP AN IDIOT WAITING?
I DUNNO.
I'LL TELL YOU LATER.
24

"MY RAPPORT WITH THE COMMON-CRIMINAL ELEMENT HAS ALWAYS BEEN TENUOUS...
"...INTELLECTUALLY AND ARTISTICALLY ONE-SIDED.
"SO I WAS FORCED TO GATHER FUNDS FOR MY NEXT CAPER ON MY OWN
"I DID IT THE OLD-FASHIONED WAY UNCREATIVE STICK-UPS AND WORK-A-DAY MUGGINGS
KING KIRBY
RIDE IT COWGIRL!
BRONCO MALT LIQUOR
"I HAD RESIGNED MYSELF TO A SOLO CAREER.
"BUT ISN'T THAT HOW IT ALWAYS IS?
"YOU STOP LOOKING FOR SOMETHING AND UP IT POPS.
"KINDRED SOULS.
HAND OVER THE CASH--
--BUCKO


"I HAD THE PLAN I HAD THE GANG.
"QUERY AND ECHO WERE EAGER ACCOMPLICES... IF A BIT ON THE WILD SIDE.
"ALL THAT WAS LEFT WAS THE PUZZLEMENT..
READY GIRLS?
WE WERE-
CROSS WORD
END 2 ACROSS
--BORN READY, EDDIE.
"AND MY MOST AMBITIOUS AND AUDACIOUS SCORE.
WHAT HAS MEASUREMENTS OF 36-24-36-44 MAGNUM?
MY TWO SHRINKING VIOLETS HERE MOVE AND THEY'LL PUNCH YOUR TICKET.

ONE ACROSS: IT HOLDS WATER.
ONE DOWN: A BLACK-TIE DINNER.
TWO DOWN: A PUBLIC WAY.
ROSSWORD
TWO ACROSS: AN INTERROGATION
THREE DOWN: OVER THE DAM.
"SUNDAY'S OTHER BROTHER?"
IT MEANS TUESDAY. IT'S FROM AN OLD ENGLISH RHYME
NEVER WAS GOOD AT THOSE THINGS, LIEUTENANT
I USED TO DO THEM ON STAKEOUTS.
THIS RIDDLER'S A STONE PSYCHO. WE GOING TO BRING THE WHOLE SQUAD IN ON THIS?
AND THEN SOME.
I THINK A CONCERNED CITIZEN MIGHT HELP US OUT, STAN.
HUH?

"MY MISSION WAS TWO-FOLD:

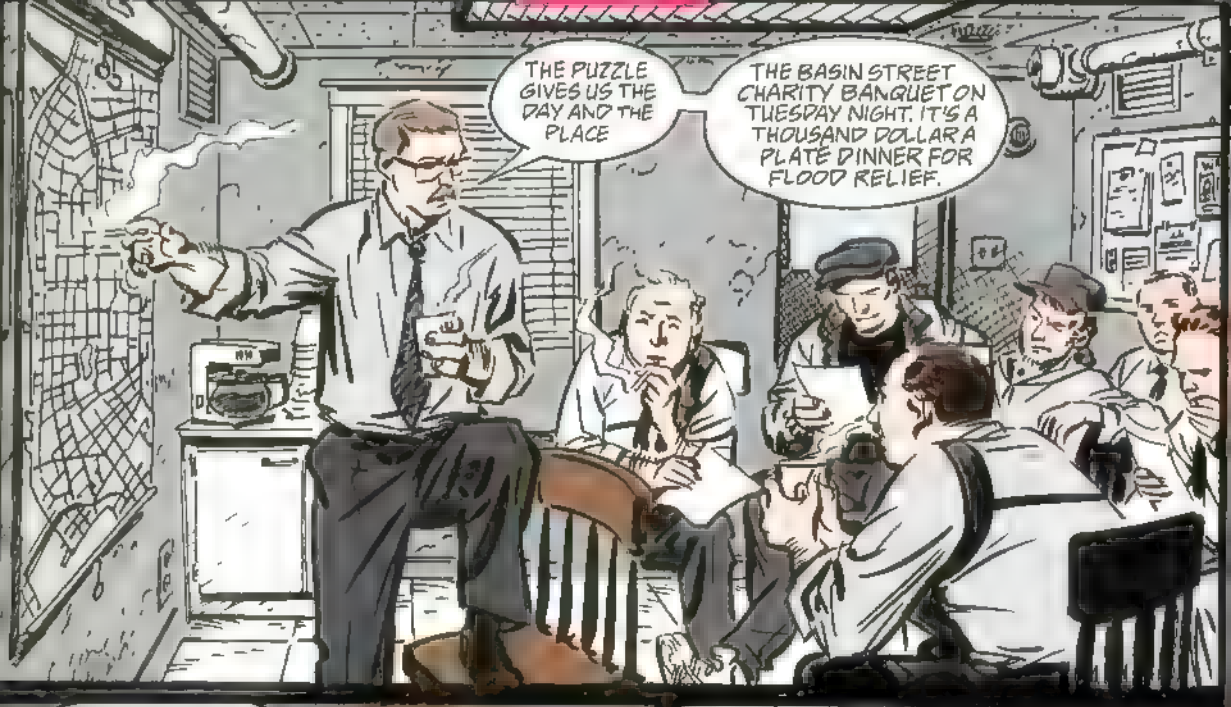
"TO INTRIGUE HIM AND CONFOUND HIM.

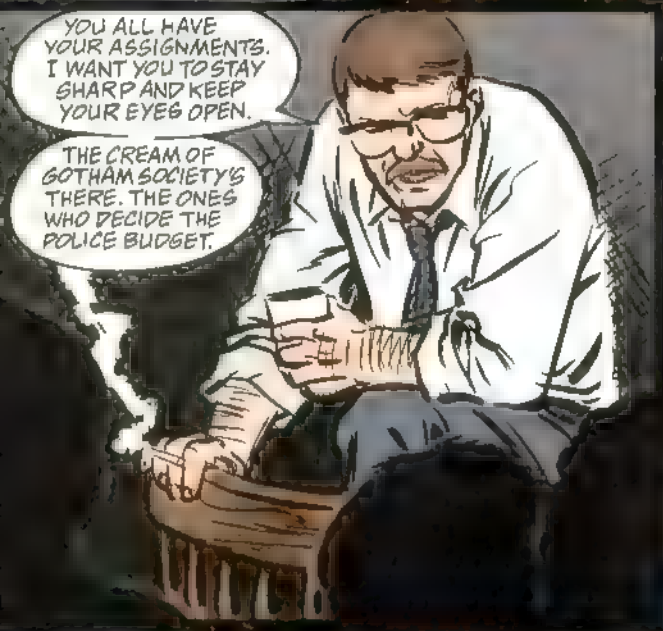
"I HAD TO BE MORE CIRCUMSPECT. LESS OBVIOUS AND MORE DEVIOUS.

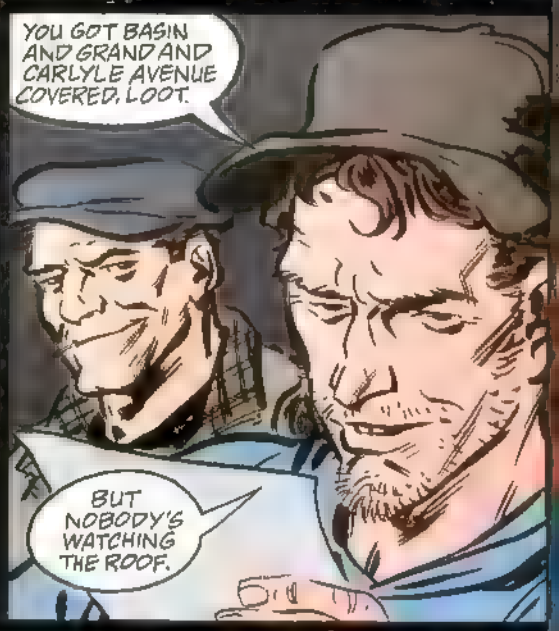
"I HAD TO FALL BACK ON MY TRUE TALENT.

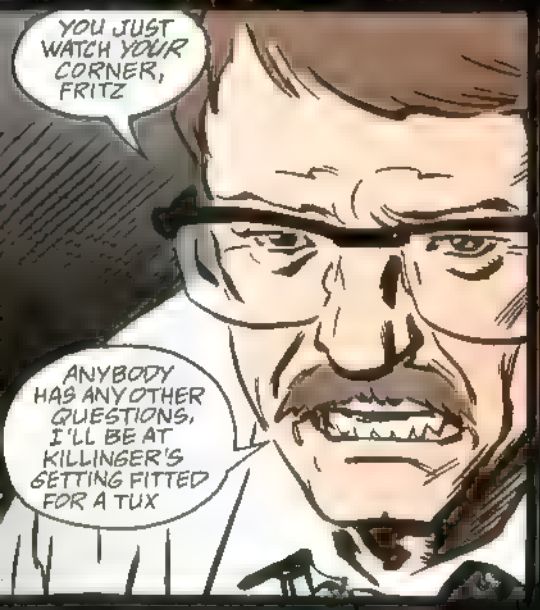
BASIN
ATF
NRL
QUESTION
UEO
ETUESDAY
T

CHEATING.


THE PUZZLE GIVES US THE DAY AND THE PLACE
THE BASIN STREET CHARITY BANQUET ON TUESDAY NIGHT. IT'S A THOUSAND DOLLAR A PLATE DINNER FOR FLOOD RELIEF.


YOU ALL HAVE YOUR ASSIGNMENTS. I WANT YOU TO STAY SHARP AND KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN.
THE CREAM OF GOTHAM SOCIETY'S THERE. THE ONES WHO DECIDE THE POLICE BUDGET.


YOU GOT BASIN AND GRAND AND CARLYLE AVENUE COVERED, LOOT.
BUT NOBODY'S WATCHING THE ROOF.

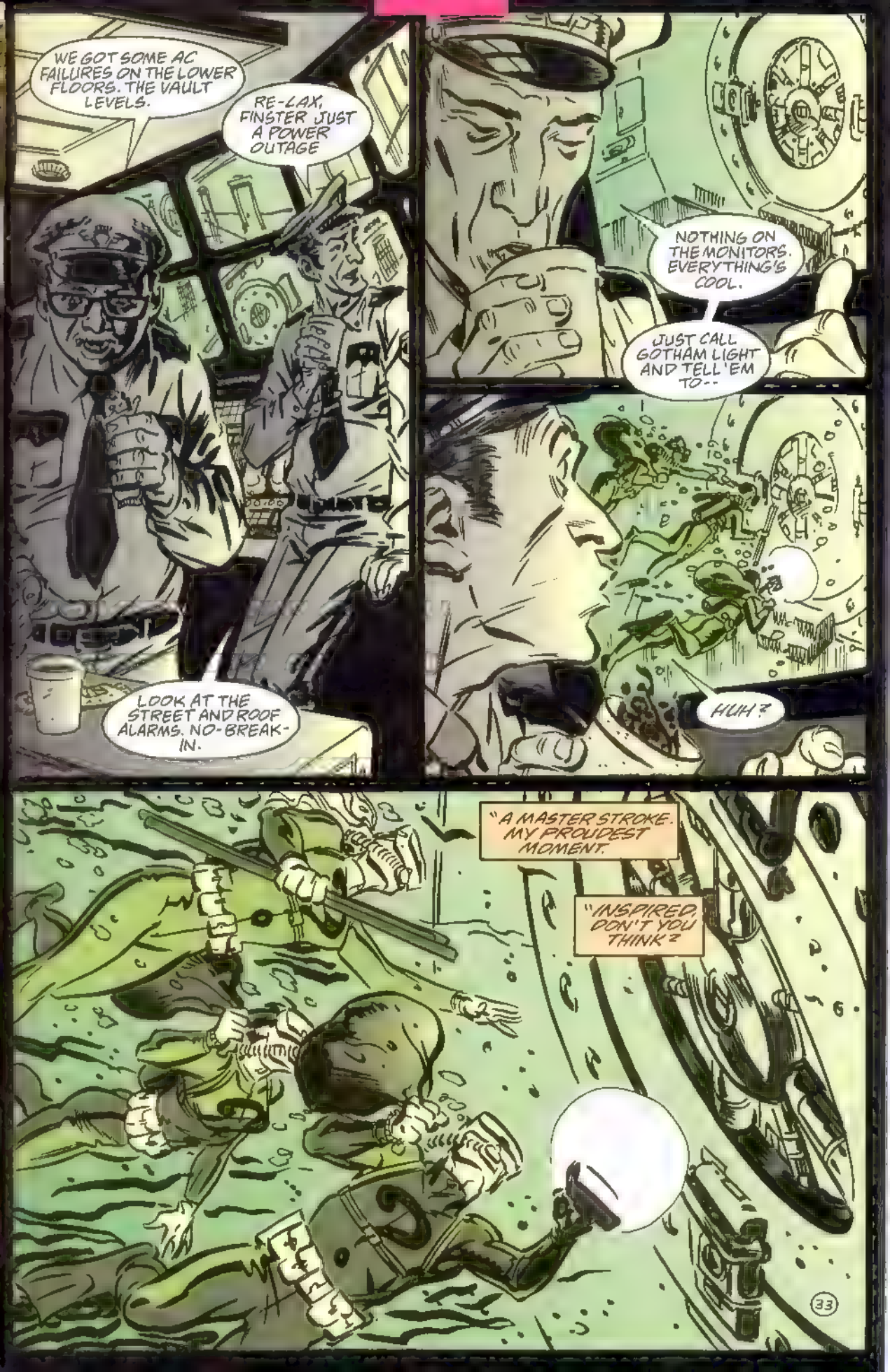

YOU JUST WATCH YOUR CORNER, FRITZ
ANYBODY HAS ANY OTHER QUESTIONS, I'LL BE AT KILLINGER'S GETTING FITTED FOR A TUX

GORDON'S LEAVING THE ROOF WIDE OPEN, STAN.
MORE FLIES WITH HONEY, FRITZIE.
WHAT'S THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN?

GOD'S TEARS FOUNDATION CHARITY
GOTHAM -2- NITE
--A SELLOUT CROWD OF GOTHAM'S WEALTHY AND RENOWNED FOR THIS CHARITY DINNER TO BENEFIT THE MIDWEST FLOOD VICTIMS.
THE CITY BY THE SEA EXTENDS ITS HAND AND OPENS ITS WALLET FOR THE DELUGED TOWNS AND CITIES OF THE CORNBELT.
BASIN STREET HOT
ANYONE WHO'S ANYONE IS HERE TONIGHT.
NO SIGN OF TROUBLE UP HERE, LIEUTENANT

HOW ARE YOU HOLDING UP?
I'M NOT SURE WHICH IS WORSE-- STRANGLING IN THIS COLLAR OR DYING FOR A CIGARETTE.
SINCE WE'RE TALKING, I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T SEE ANYTHING?
NOT A SIGN
AND THE LIMOS ARE STARTING TO PULL UP TO TAKE OUR GUESTS AWAY.
HE THREW US A CURVE THIS TIME. HE'S PROBABLY WATCHING ON TV AND HOWLING
MAYBE BUT HE'S NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE
MEANING?
A DECOY? BUT THE PUZZLE. IT POINTS TO THE BANQUET.
YOUR CHICAGO ACCENT IS SHOWING AGAIN
HM?
THE RIDDLER WANTS TO PROVE HE'S SMARTER THAN WE ARE
A SIMPLE FALSE ALARM WOULDN'T SATISFY HIM. MAYBE THIS IS A DIVERSION FOR US
YOU SAID "BANK-WET"
HOLD ON...

ARE YOU STILL THERE?
THE PUZZLE STILL WORKS
BUT NOT THE WAY WE THOUGHT.
HE THREW US A BLIND LIEUTENANT.
I'M GOING OFF LINE
BUT WHAT ARE YOU-- CLIK!
RADIO. SCAN POLICE FREQUENCIES.
--RESPONDING TO FUR SALON BREAK-IN--
--UNIT ADAM FIVE SEE THE MAN--
--LOUD DISTURBANCE AT DVORAK AND GRANGE--
--A WATER MAIN BREAK-- RESERVOIR AVENUE--
GOTCHA.


WE GOT SOME AC FAILURES ON THE LOWER FLOORS. THE VAULT LEVELS.
RE-LAX, FINSTER JUST A POWER OUTAGE
LOOK AT THE STREET AND ROOF ALARMS. NO-BREAK-IN.
NOTHING ON THE MONITORS. EVERYTHING'S COOL.
JUST CALL GOTHAM LIGHT AND TELL 'EM TO--
HUH?
"A MASTER STROKE. MY PROUDEST MOMENT.
"INSPIRED, DON'T YOU THINK?
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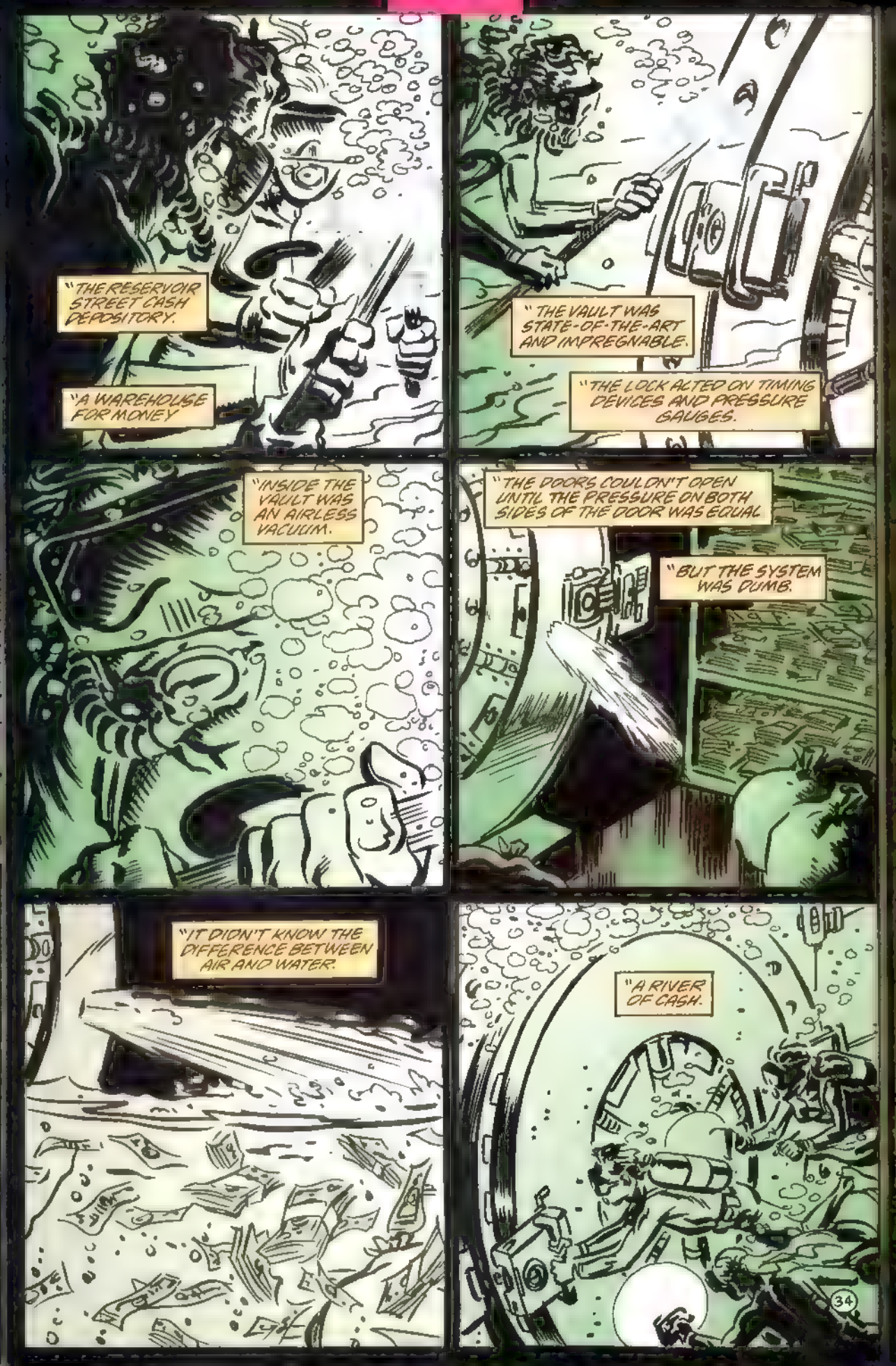
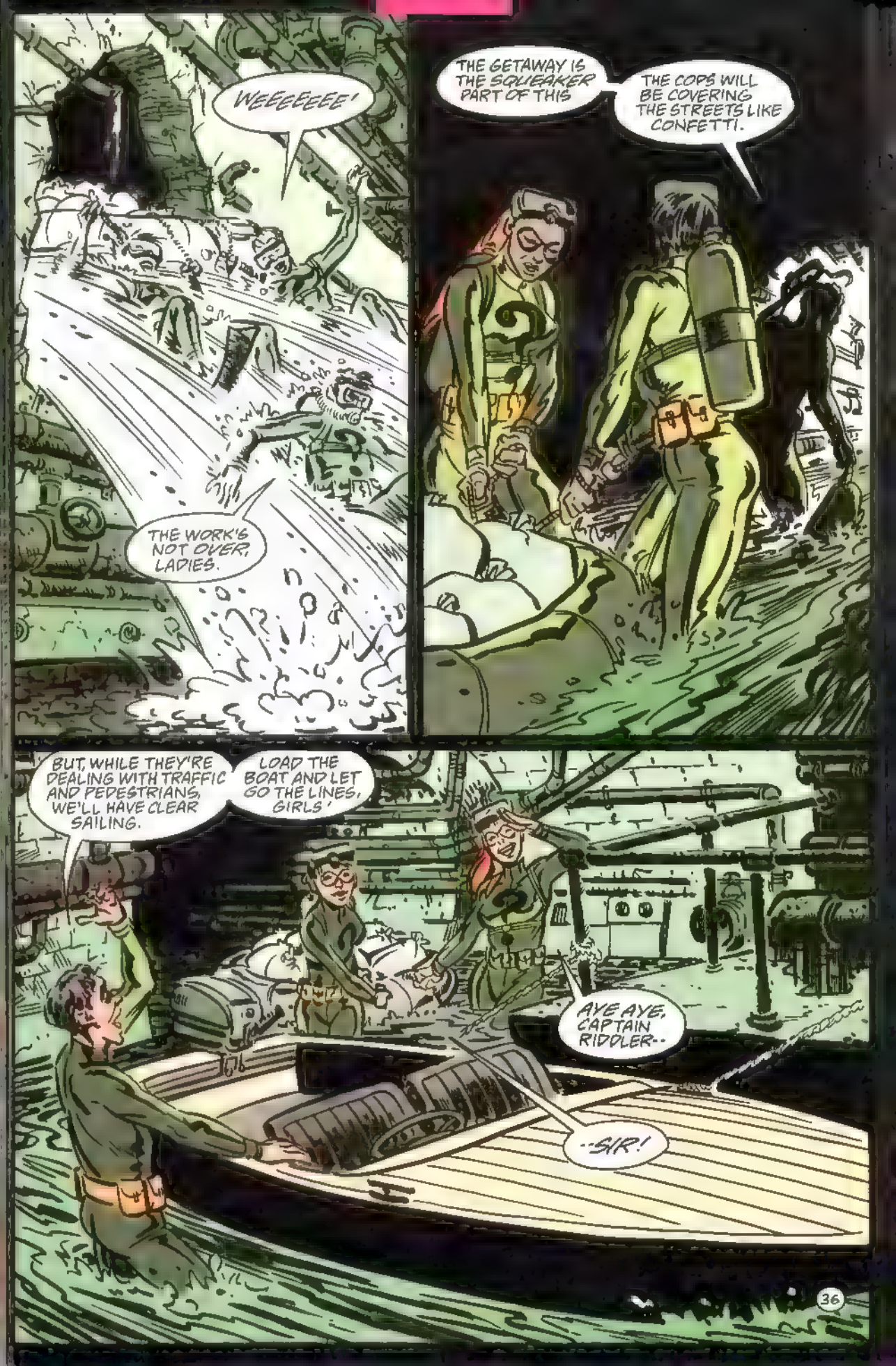

"THE RESERVOIR STREET CASH DEPOSITORY.
"A WAREHOUSE FOR MONEY
"THE VAULT WAS STATE-OF-THE-ART AND IMPREGNABLE.
"THE LOCK ACTED ON TIMING DEVICES AND PRESSURE GAUGES.
"INSIDE THE VAULT WAS AN AIRLESS VACUUM.
"THE DOORS COULDN'T OPEN UNTIL THE PRESSURE ON BOTH SIDES OF THE DOOR WAS EQUAL
"BUT THE SYSTEM WAS DUMB.
"IT DIDN'T KNOW THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AIR AND WATER.
"A RIVER OF CASH.

THIS ONE'S A RIP, JIM.
THIS RIDDLER THREW US A CURVE.
GOTHAM CASH DEPOSI
THE CLUES MATCH THE CRIME BUT NOT THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE ON THE BREWERY BUILDING.
THE THREE BELOW-STREET LEVELS ARE FLOODED
THE CREEP BLEW THE WATER MAINE WHEN HE BLASTED A HOLE IN THE VAULT-LEVEL WALL.
WHAT'S THE WORD ON THOSE DIVERS?
ON THE WAY.
THEY'D BETTER HUSTLE. ANY LUCK GETTING THAT MAIN SHUT OFF?
GUESS WHO WELDED THE VALVES OPEN?
OH MAN...
THEY GOT THE VAULT OPEN AND THEY'RE STRIPPING IT TO THE WALLS!
I WANT EVERY AVAILABLE MAN TO COVER EVERY STREET AROUND HERE.
THEY HAVE TO SURFACE SOMEWHERE


WEEEEEEE!
THE WORK'S NOT OVER, LADIES.
THE GETAWAY IS THE SQUEAKER PART OF THIS
THE COPS WILL BE COVERING THE STREETS LIKE CONFETTI.
BUT, WHILE THEY'RE DEALING WITH TRAFFIC AND PEDESTRIANS, WE'LL HAVE CLEAR SAILING.
LOAD THE BOAT AND LET GO THE LINES, GIRLS!
AYE AYE, CAPTAIN RIDDLER--
--SIR!

TRY THIS ONE...
...HOW DOES A BOAT SHOW AFFECTION?
...BY HUGGING THE SHORE...
Q.E.III

"I HEARD HE DRESSES LIKE A FLYING RAT TO PUT THE SCARE INTO EVERYBODY.
"HE FIGURES HE CAN FRIGHTEN HIS ENEMIES INTO SUBMISSION.
"WORKS FOR ME

"THE GIRLS WERE GIVING AS GOOD AS THEY GOT.
"WELL, NOT QUITE AS GOOD AS THEY GOT
WONDERING HOW I FOUND YOU, RIDDLER?
EEEP.
HOW IS A LOW-LIFE HOOD LIKE A SEWER?

THEY BOTH SEEK THEIR OWN LEVEL!
LAME, BATMAN LIKE YOU'RE GOING TO BE!
END OF THE LINE...
S' FUNNY
THAT'S WHAT I WAS GOING TO SAY.
BUT I DIDN'T WANT TO SPOIL THE PUNCHLINE!

"I BEAT THE BANK, THE COPS AND THE BATMAN.
"AND THE TWO MILL THAT WAS LEFT IN THE BOAT WASN'T BAD EITHER.
NOK NOK NOK
GO AWAY!
"AFTER EXPENSES AND A THREE-WAY SPLIT, OF COURSE."
OH!
HI, GIRLS I WAS JUST--
UH-HM
--DRYING OFF YOUR SHARES
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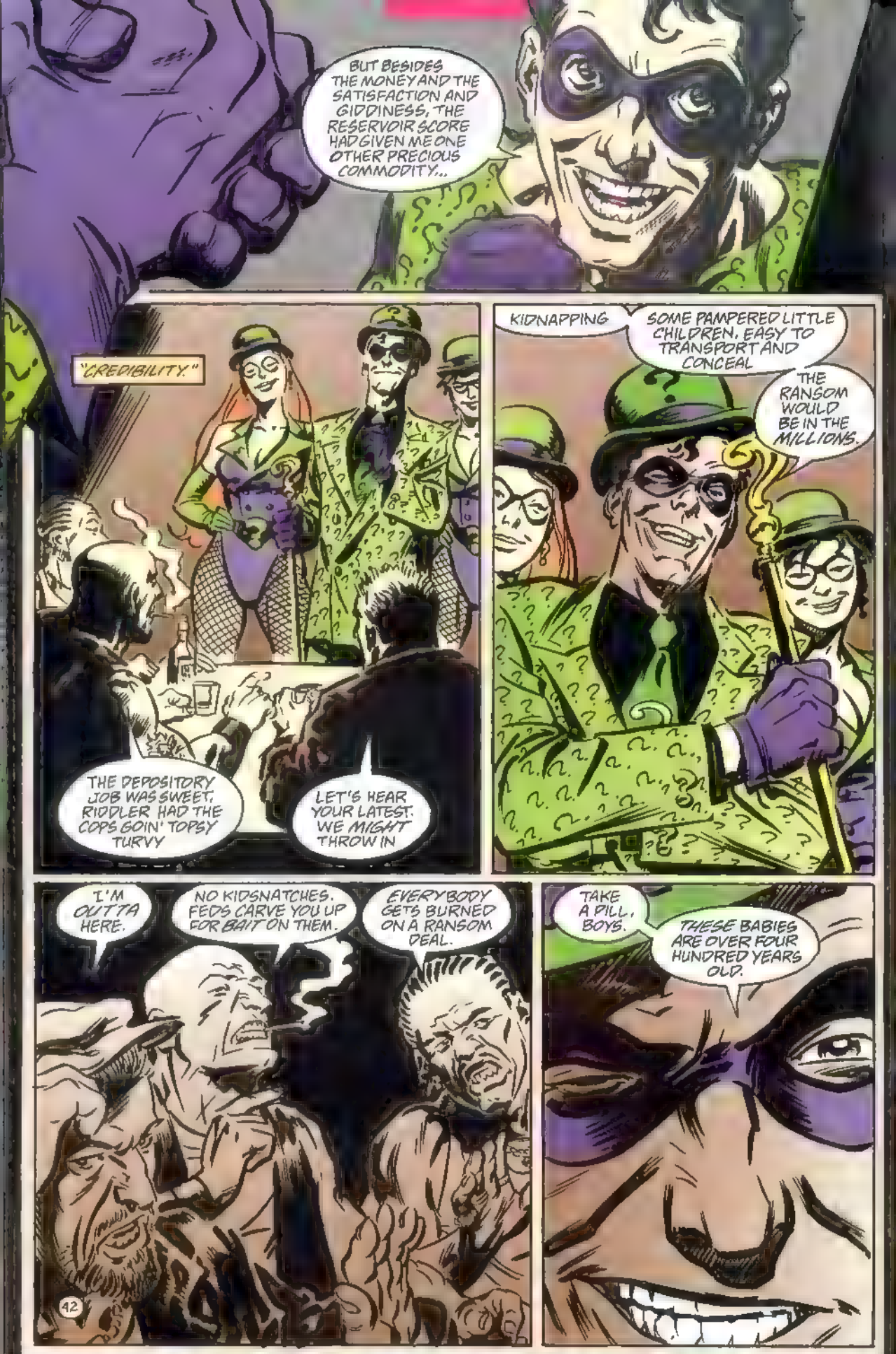

BUT BESIDES THE MONEY AND THE SATISFACTION AND GIDDINESS, THE RESERVOIR SCORE HAD GIVEN ME ONE OTHER PRECIOUS COMMODITY...
"CREDIBILITY."
THE DEPOSITORY JOB WAS SWEET. RIDDLER HAD THE COPS GOIN' TOPSY TURVY
LET'S HEAR YOUR LATEST. WE MIGHT THROW IN
KIDNAPPING
SOME PAMPERED LITTLE CHILDREN. EASY TO TRANSPORT AND CONCEAL
THE RANSOM WOULD BE IN THE MILLIONS.
I'M OUTTA HERE.
NO KIDSNATCHES. FEDS CARVE YOU UP FOR BAIT ON THEM.
EVERYBODY GETS BURNED ON A RANSOM DEAL.
TAKE A PILL, BOYS.
THESE BABIES ARE OVER FOUR HUNDRED YEARS OLD.

WHAT MUSICAL INSTRUMENT DOESN'T TELL THE TRUTH?
HOW DO YOU SNEAK INTO AN OPERA HOUSE?
WHY DID THE COMPOSER STOP WATCHING TELEVISION?

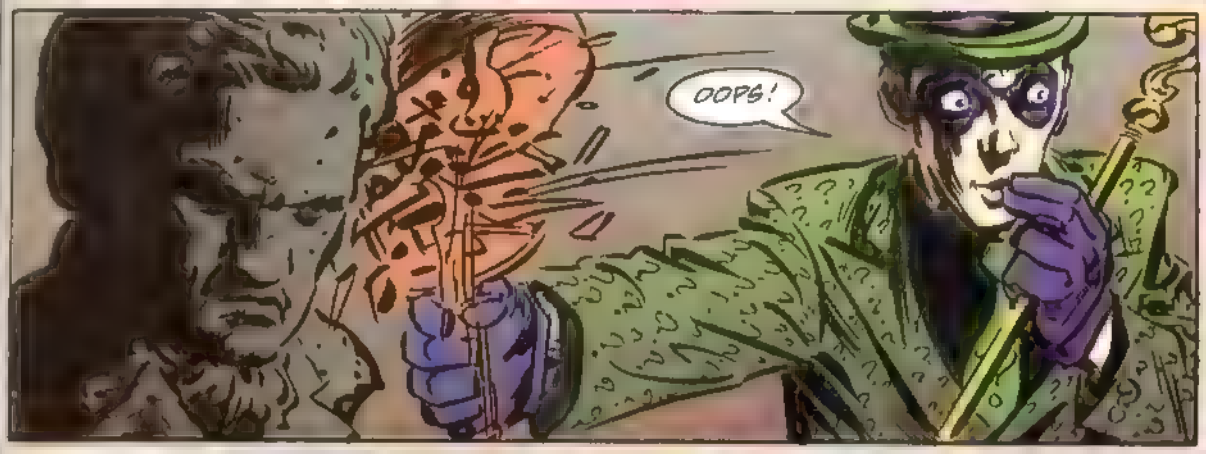
THIS GUY'S GIVING ME A GUT-ACHE
WHEN DID YOU RECEIVE THIS?
IT WAS DELIVERED THIS EVENING. THE BOMB SQUAD TOOK AN HOUR TO CLEAR IT.

COULD BE A MUSIC-RELATED CRIME OR ANOTHER DIVERSION TACTIC.
HE'S GETTING COCKY. MAYBE I SHOULD PURSUE THE OBVIOUS.

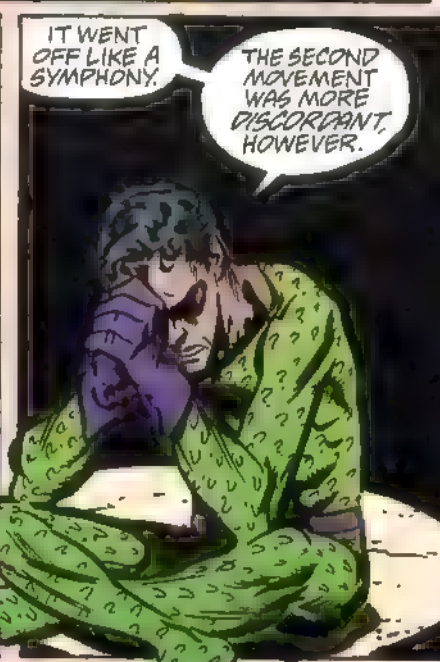
THAT'S AS GOOD A--
LIEUTENANT, THE BOMB SQUAD CLEARED THE OTHER PART OF THE PACKAGE

SHOULD WE HOLD HIM OR READ HIM HIS RIGHTS?

NO.
NOT MY BABIES...
THEY'RE OF NO USE TO YOU... THEY BELONG TO THE WORLD...
THEY ARE MADE FOR THE HANDS OF THE WORLD'S FINEST MUSICIANS
ONE SIDE!
EXACTLY. EACH OF THESE INSTRUMENTS IS ONE OF A KIND SO PRECIOUS AND RARE THAT THEY ARE ONLY LENT TO THE IMPRESARIOS.
SOME ARE VALUED AT A MILLION OR MORE, HM?
IF ONE WERE TO BREAK...
NO!
THAT IS AN AMATI... IT IS THREE CENTURIES...


OOPS!

WHEN YOU COME TO, YOU'D BETTER HUNT UP YOUR CHECKBOOK.
I'LL BE IN TOUCH


IT WENT OFF LIKE A SYMPHONY.
THE SECOND MOVEMENT WAS MORE DISCORDANT, HOWEVER.

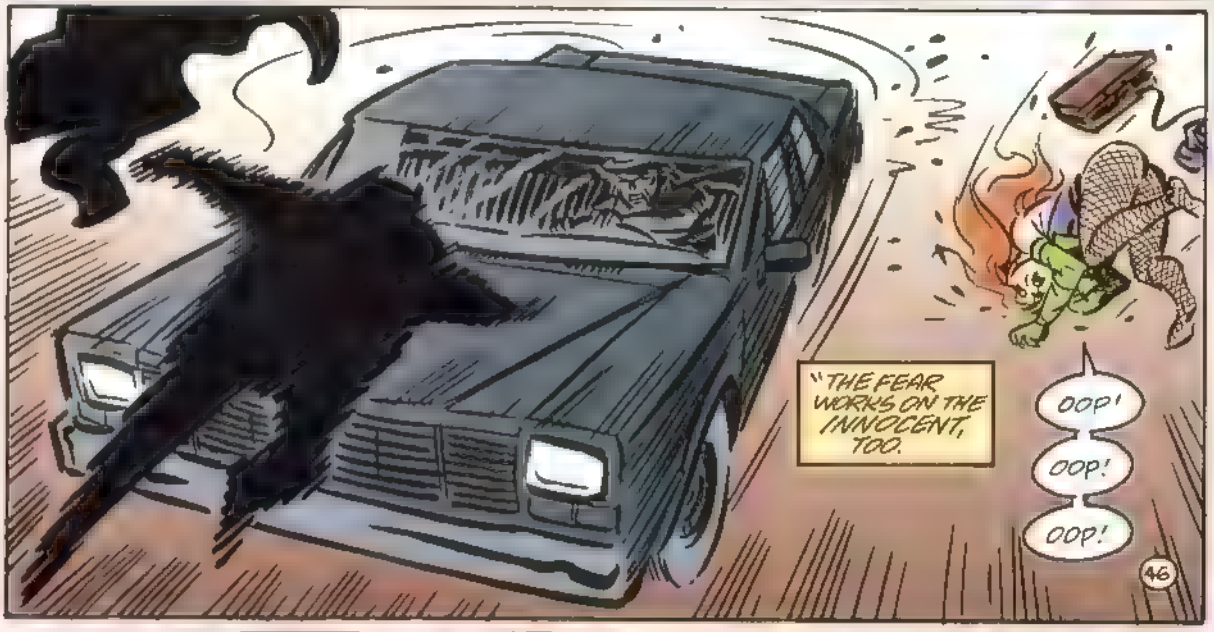
"THE RANSOM IS ALWAYS THE RISKIEST PASSAGE IN A KIDNAPPING SCAM.

"AS LONG AS OUR TUBBY LITTLE AFICIONADO HADN'T GONE TO THE POLICE IT WOULD ALL GO SMOOTHLY.
FIRST THE CASH--
--THEN THE FIDDLES.

"AND HE HADN'T GONE TO THE COPS.
DON'T CALL US--
--WE'LL CALL YOU.

"HE HADN'T GONE TO ANYBODY.
PUNCH IT, ECHO WE--
--WHA--?
OOH?

"SOMEONE HAD GOTTEN TO HIM
WHOOP!


"THE FEAR WORKS ON THE INNOCENT, TOO.
OOP!
OOP!
OOP!

YOU SON OF A--
UNNH!
"CONFIDENT THAT QUERY AND ECHO HAD THE RANSOM WELL IN HAND I PROCEEDED WITH OTHER BUSINESS
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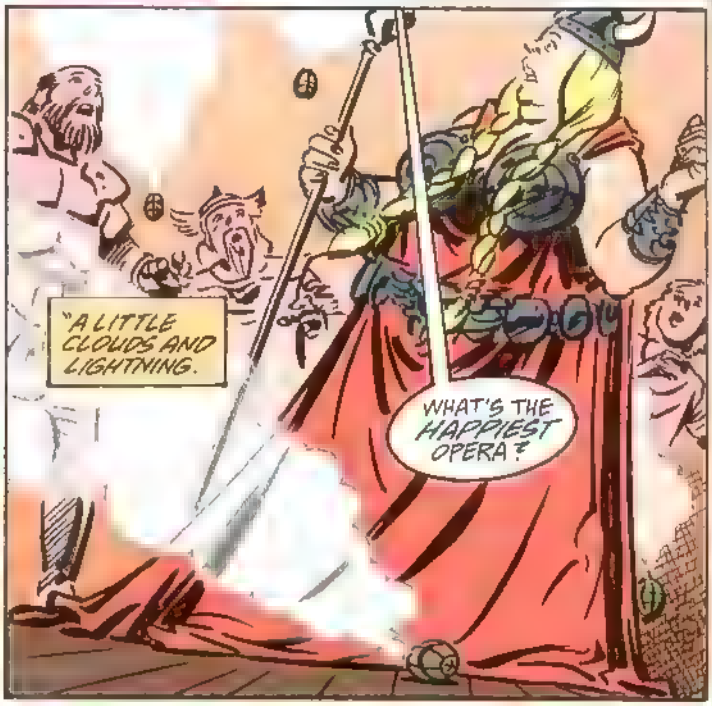
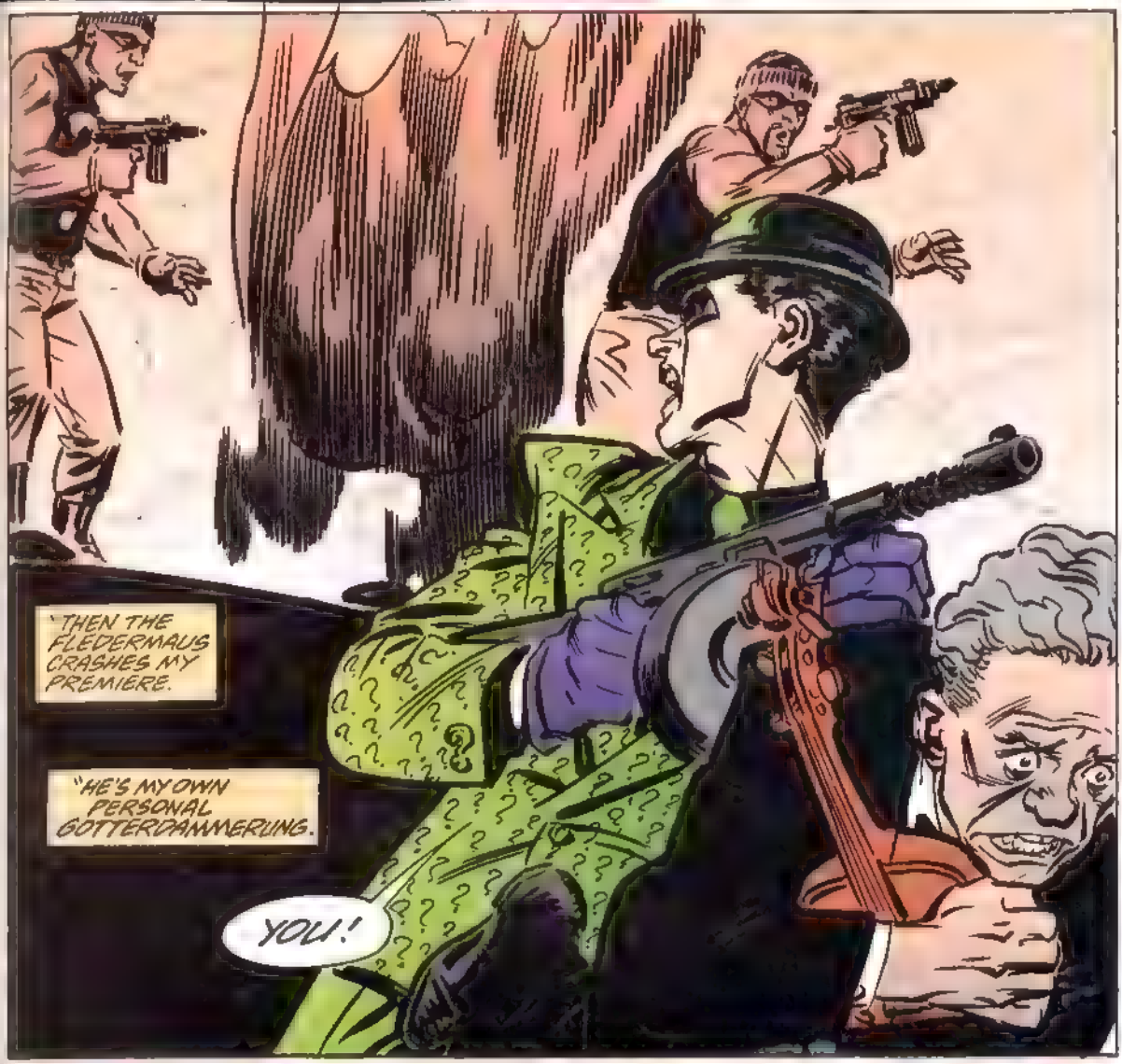
"MY OPUS WAS REACHING ITS CRESCENDO.

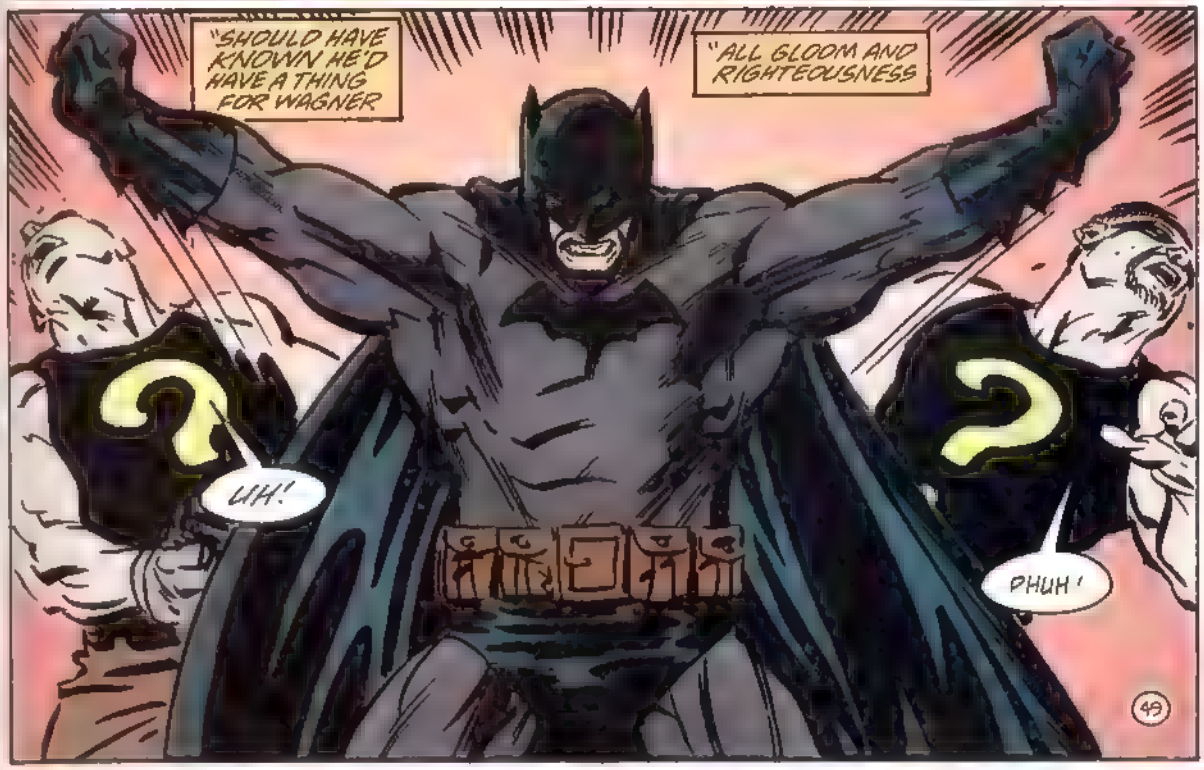

"A LITTLE CLOUDS AND LIGHTNING.
WHAT'S THE HAPPIEST OPERA?

"A LITTLE THUNDER
WHY LOWENGRIN, NATURALLY

WHY WAS THE FIDDLER SO QUIET?
'CAUSE A CATGUT HIS TONGUE.
HAND IT OVER, YO-YO.

Buh-BUT IT'S A STRADIVARIUS.
AND YOU COULD BE A CANOE, YASCHA.


"THEN THE FLEDERMAUS CRASHES MY PREMIERE.
"HE'S MY OWN PERSONAL GOTTERDAMMERUNG.
YOU!


"SHOULD HAVE KNOWN HE'D HAVE A THING FOR WAGNER.
"ALL GLOOM AND RIGHTEOUSNESS
UH!
PHUH!

"THE IGNOMINY.
"THE HUMILIATION."
IT WASN'T THE MONEY I WANTED.
IT WASN'T THE ACTION I SOUGHT.
I JUST LIKE THE ATTENTION.
"BUT NOT LIKE THAT!"
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"AND THAT'S MY STORY.
"AND IT ENDS HERE IN ARKHAM."
--BUT ONLY THIS CHAPTER!
I'LL SHAKE THE DUST OF THIS PLACE OFF ME AND THEN THE BATMAN WILL HAVE A REAL RIVAL FOR GOTHAM!
THERE. THAT'S ALL OF IT. MY PSYCHOSIS. MY MANIA. MY FAULT.
THE SECRET YOU'VE BEEN DIGGING FOR ALL THESE MONTHS.
I'M NOT A CRIMINAL GENIUS. JUST A LONELY LITTLE BOY LOOKING FOR LOVE.
I JUST WANT SOMEONE TO RESPECT ME. TO SAY, "EDDIE, YOU'RE ONE CLEVER S.O.B."
YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME?
WELL...

NOTHING TO SAY?
NO SMART-LIPPED POP-PSYCH REJOINDER?
NO SNAP JUDGEMENTS?
I TOLD YOU MY STORY! I ANSWERED YOUR QUESTIONS! I'VE LAID MYSELF BARE!
I'M NOT A RIDDLE ANYMORE!
I'M NOT A RIDDLE ANYMORE!
I'M NOT A RIDDLE ANYMORE.
HUH?
SESSION'S OVER, EDDIE!
MIO-MA

NO ONE THERE.
NO ONE THERE.
NO ONE THERE!

NO
ONE
THERE.
KNL 95

SO WHO ARE YOU ASSIGNED TO?
SNACKS
JIZ BOX
EDWARD NIGMA. THE RIDDLER. WE WERE TALKING TO HIM IN OBSERVATION ROOM SIX.
TRYING TO TALK. HE'S BEEN CATATONIC ALL MORNING.

SO WE TOOK A LUNCH BREAK.
IT'S NOT LIKE WE WERE GOING TO MISS ANYTHING.
ARKHAM STAFF
ARKHAM STAFF
THE END